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LAWRENCE, MASS.
EAGLE-TRIBUNE

DAILY-43,410

JAN 3 1967

Warning In Dire Prophecies

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The signs of things to come, as seen by two prominent Americans recognized as articulate liberals, can be somewhat encouraging to Americans deeply concerned about the future of their country.

Sen. Clark, Pennsylvania Democrat, defined without elaboration what he called three threats to American democracy: The military-industrial partnership against which Gen. Eisenhower warned, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The same day John Kenneth Galbraith, Harvard economist, speaking in London, foresaw the day when large corporations dependent on government orders would become part of the administrative complex of the state. The time will come, he said, when we will be amused "at the pretense that once caused people to refer to General Electric or du Pont or Vickers as private business."

Galbraith, memory instantly recalls, was foreseeing in the United States a development of the corporate state that Mussolini conceived, that was brought into being under the hated name of Fascism, and that produced a modern tyranny.

Clark, perhaps unwittingly, was directing attention to the most dangerous foe of human freedom, government itself. The CIA and the FBI are arms of the central government, one devoted to the preservation of international security, the other to the preservation of internal security, both obviously arms of great power and both potentially dangerous to freedom the moment either passes under the control of an Administration bent on acquisition of supreme power.

The dire developments that these modern liberals foresee can be prevented by the people. Danger in them lies in doubt that the people will prevent them. The doubt is established on the democracy that concerns Clark; for mass democracy of the kind we are rapidly developing in this country, a democracy built on universal suffrage blind to the truth that power to exercise the ballot is one that should be earned, is rich soil for seeds of demagogic tyranny.

Encouraging aspect of these utterances is that they indicate that at least some modern liberals define danger, perhaps unwittingly, in the centralization of power for which they are the principal apostles.